



**Challenges of
Recovery Pt. 2:
Emotional
and Mental
Health**



BODY BRAVE
recovery for **every** body

Emotional Health

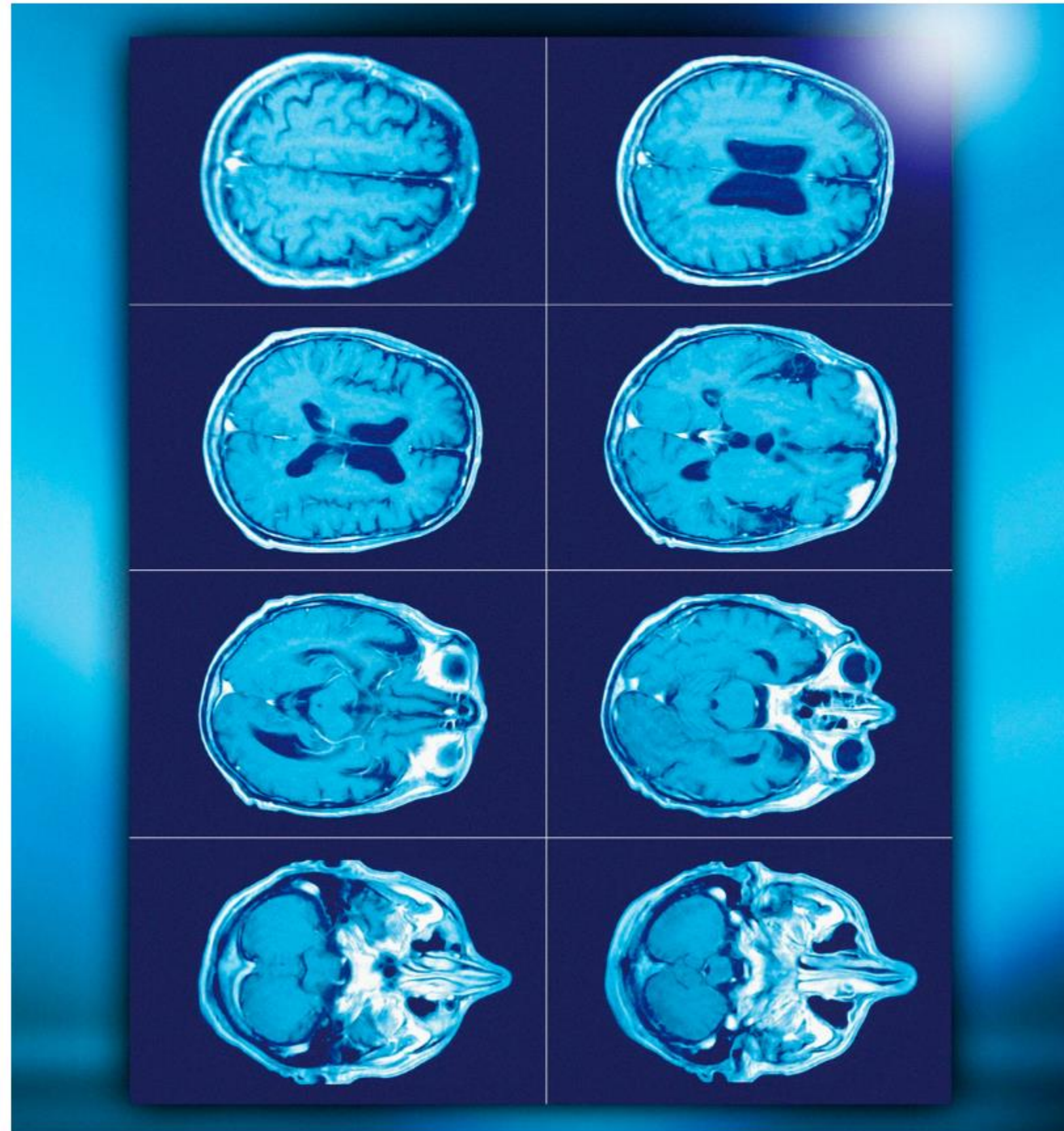
Eating disorder recovery requires a comprehensive, holistic approach to healing.

This means that both mental and emotional health is important to recovery, too. You can't maintain recovery from an eating disorder while only paying attention to the physical aspect of the condition.

You must consider mental and emotional health as well.

Negative Thinking

Recovery requires a significant paradigm shift in thinking



Changing Our Brains

If your brain is an open field, then a thought presents a path through the field. The more you walk that path, the more worn it becomes. Eventually, this path feels like the only way through.

Arbitrary Inference

Also known as 'jumping to conclusions'. There are two types:

- Mind reading: imagining we know what other are thinking
- Fortune telling: predicting the future

Selective Abstraction

Only focusing on one piece of information and not taking the whole story into account. This means to select only parts of the whole picture to focus on. When we actually process things more logically, it makes sense to take in the whole picture and not just an isolated incident.

Overgeneral-ization

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw.

Sounds like:

- Everything is always terrible
- Nothing good ever happens

Magnification & Minimization

Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important, to view a situation as all good or bad, leaving no room for nuance.

Labeling & Mislabeling

Assigning labels to ourselves or other people.

Sounds like:

- "I'm a failure." - because you failed a test
- "They're selfish." - because they weren't available to talk right away

Personalization

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault.

Quite often, others behaviours and attitudes is about them, and doesn't even involve us.

Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Polarized Thinking

Or 'all or nothing' or 'black and white' thinking. Thinking in extremes.

Sounds like:

- *If I'm not perfect I have failed*
- *Either I do it right or not at all*



Negative Emotions

Recovery requires an awareness of our own emotions

Reminders about Emotions

- Emotions aren't "good" or "bad." You aren't "right" or "wrong" for having an emotion. Judging yourself for having an emotion is not helpful.
- No feeling lasts forever. They all rise and peak like ocean waves, if we don't try to "hold onto them" or "resist them."
- Feelings are not facts.
- Emotions can actually be powerful tools for us if we are willing to explore and understand them.

Emotions and their Gifts

	includes:	Their gifts
Anger	resentment, irritation, frustration	assertiveness strength energy
Fear	apprehension, overwhelm, threatened	preservation wisdom protection
Pain	hurt, pity, sad, lonely	healing growth awareness
Joy	happy, elated, hopeful	abundance happiness gratitude

Emotions and their Gifts

	includes:	Their gifts
Passion	enthusiasm, desire, zest	appetite energy excitement
Love	affection, compassion, warmth	connection life spirituality
Shame	embarrassed, humble	humility containment humanity
Guilt	regretful, contrite, remorseful	values amends containment

Feelings about Weight Fluctuations

Why do we experience weight changes?

Weight restoration in the process of eating disorder recovery refers to an individual reaching weight stability. This means that an individual reaches a weight that is healthy for them, meets their nutritional and growth needs, and is a weight that they are able to maintain long-term.

Why are weight changes so hard?

For those in eating disorder recovery, weight changes are often one of the most challenging parts of recovery because it necessitates a change in both behaviour (typically eating/movement habits) and thinking.

How can I deal with emotions surrounding weight changes?

It's normal for complex emotions to come with weight fluctuations. Overcoming the negative thoughts and feelings we have about weight change requires the same kind of intention and emotional energy as changing our other negative thoughts or behaviours.

Practice of Expansion

- 1) Observe Your Feelings
- 2) Breathe Into Them
- 3) Make Room for Them
- 4) Allow Them to Be There



Sense of Self

Recovery requires a new understanding of ourselves

Creating a Sense of Self

- Disturbances in self-concept have been theorized as a major vulnerability for the development and maintenance of eating disorders (as well as relapse)
- Research has found that women in recovery from an eating disorder describing reaching self-acceptance, as well as cultivating and maintaining a sense of self-worth, as critical to attaining and maintaining recovery

The Life Story Model of Human Identity

Says that individuals create stories about themselves by continuously weaving their own episodes and experiences selectively, choosing those that were most memorable and important to them.

The individual then tells and retells those stories, and this reinforces them. They become more believable each time it's told, whether it's to someone else, or you retell it to yourself.

The process:

What I choose to do says something about me.



I have now decided that those episodes or periods of my life are memorable and so they make up who I am.

For someone struggling with disordered eating:

I spend a lot of time overexercising. This thing that I do – overexercising – says something about me.



It's memorable and I did it for a long time. It must be what I value. I must be the person who is always in the gym. It's something I've always done, and so it defines me.



"Eating disorders have more than just one component, and so does recovery is whole. I believe it's possible because I've seen it, and even though I can't say I'm fully there yet, I know I will get there and so can you."

- Liv Crichton

Questions?

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